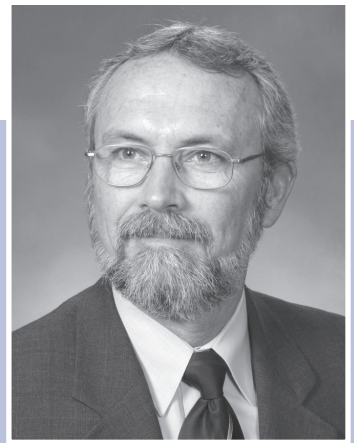




SEN. JIM HONEYFORD



REP. BRUCE CHANDLER



REP. DAN NEWHOUSE

2006 SESSION UPDATE

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- Labor, Commerce, Research and Development
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- Capital Budget, *Assistant Ranking Republican*
- Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade
- Financial Institutions & Insurance

15TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Dear Friends,

The 2006 legislative session is under way in Olympia. Although it is scheduled to last just 60 days, this session already promises to be full of issues that will have a lasting impact on our state and our lives.

One of the most important things we will do as your legislators this year is vote on a supplemental budget, which will address unanticipated changes to the 2005-07 state budget adopted last year – things like increases in school enrollments or prison populations. Trouble is, the governor's proposed supplemental budget not only would cover the extra costs but also spend another *\$504 million* on new programs or services. If last year is any example, the majority party will consider the governor's proposal, adopt a budget that spends *even more* and ultimately join with the governor to agree on a budget that is *bigger still* and leaves far too little in reserve. You can count on us to vigorously support and strengthen compliance with the voter-approved state spending limit and promote proper stewardship of your tax dollars. You'll find more in this newsletter about taxes and spending and how they affect our economy and "business climate."

Speaking of our business climate, another major priority this year will be passing legislation that helps the agricultural community to be more competitive. Agriculture, a cornerstone of our economy here in the 15th District, is as essential as any industry in our state and produces more jobs. Yet growers and producers are continually forced to deal with government-created obstacles such as land-use and water restrictions, high labor costs and taxes. This session we will continue to work on removing these barriers so agricultural businesses and family farms can prosper.

Thanks for taking time to read up on what we're doing in the Legislature. Please call or e-mail us with your questions or comments, and drop by for a visit if you are in Olympia. We appreciate your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

Sen. Jim Honeyford

Rep. Bruce Chandler

Rep. Dan Newhouse

**TOLL-FREE
LEGISLATIVE
HOTLINE:
1-800-562-6000**

LOOKING FOR STUDENTS TO SERVE AS LEGISLATIVE PAGES

Since 1891, young people from across the state have come to Olympia for a week during the session to serve as pages for the Washington State Legislature. Nearly 400 students between the ages of 14 and 16 will participate again this year in the legislative page program. Pages are required to be in good academic standing and obtain permission from their parents and school. If you know of a student interested in becoming a page, please call any of our legislative offices to get an application.

2006 SESSION UPDATE

HELP WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE SURVIVE AND THRIVE

Washington’s agricultural products, from livestock to tree fruit, are well known around the world. Agriculture is Washington’s top job-producing industry. Yet lawmakers have not given it the attention or assistance provided to other industries in Washington, such as aerospace and computer software. This session we will introduce and support legislation aimed at removing the obstacles faced by people in this industry. Our plan includes legislation to:

- Eliminate sales tax on dyed (off-road) diesel used for agricultural purposes and farm equipment purchases;
- Protect farmers’ property rights by opposing the inconsistent application of setbacks/buffers and bringing land-use planning back to the local level, among other changes;
- Rein in wage and labor requirements that put Washington farmers and processors at a national and international competitive disadvantage;
- Develop water storage and regional water supply solutions, including Black Rock Reservoir;
- Acknowledge local and regional water conservation efforts and remove regulatory barriers to the efficient use and transfer of agricultural water, including reforming “use it or lose it” provisions;
- Support state funding to sustain agriculture, including agricultural research, technical assistance and infrastructure improvements; and
- Stop significant state agency rules from going into effect until they are signed by the governor and ratified by the Legislature.

KEEP GOVERNMENT FROM OVERSPENDING, STIFLING THE ECONOMY

Washington’s overall economy improved in 2005, thanks to strong real estate and construction activity, which meant more money coming into the state treasury through taxes and fees. That money is awfully tempting to the big-government fans in the Legislature, and the governor has set the stage for a spending spree with her supplemental budget plan.

The majority party and the governor tapped employers and families hard in 2005, imposing more than \$400 million in tax increases to support a 12 percent hike in spending. Unemployment insurance system reforms were rolled back, plus the new year brought another increase in the minimum wage (Washington’s is the nation’s highest) and higher industrial insurance (workers’ compensation) premiums for many businesses. Democrat legislators also got rid of the voter-approved spending limit in favor of a formula that allows much higher spending. All of that makes it tougher for our employers, especially those in agriculture, to compete in a worldwide market against players like California or China.

We have a few ideas that will give the economy a long-term boost and create jobs, including:

- Reviving the voter-approved spending limit and returning to the “Priorities of Government” approach that produced a sustainable budget in 2003;
- Repealing the tax increases adopted in 2005: the liquor and cigarette tax increases that hurt retailers in border counties and the new estate tax that is just plain insulting to people who have worked hard to leave something to their children; and
- Easing the tax burdens and reforming the state-run insurance systems that raise the cost of labor.

GIVE CONTROL OF HEALTH BACK TO PATIENTS WHERE IT BELONGS

Expensive mandates and runaway costs are limiting family’s options for affordable health care coverage and making it harder for doctors and other health care providers to stay in business, especially in rural areas.

We must give control of health care back to patients by providing **consumers** with affordable, customized options from which to choose. We support reforms that give **employers** flexibility to provide affordable health care coverage for employees and ensure they have a competitive menu of private coverage options. Not everyone needs the expensive one-size-fits-all coverage that’s required under current law. For instance, people shouldn’t be forced to pay for acupuncture coverage if they don’t need or want it.



Rep. Newhouse, Sen. Honeyford and Rep. Chandler stay in touch with their constituents not only through letters, e-mails and phone calls but also by gathering around a speakerphone to talk with radio stations serving the district.

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